



BLACKEST NIGHT
AFTERMATH

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DC COMICS PRESENTS, with pardonable pride, the new creative team of

PAUL CORNELL: *writer* • PETE WOODS: *artist*

BRAD ANDERSON: *colorist* • ROB LEIGH: *letterer*

DAVID FINCH, JOE WEEMS & PETER STEIGERWALD: *cover* • FINCH & STEIGERWALD: *variant cover*
who in turn (presumably) PROUDLY PRESENT

LEX LUTHOR INC.

THE BLACK RING

PART ONE

QUESTION:
WHAT ARE YOU
DOING?

BORN IN SMALLVILLE,
BUT BELIEVING HIMSELF
SUPERIOR, HE MURDERED HIS
FATHER TO ESCAPE SMALL-TOWN AMERICA,
AND BUILT AN EMPIRE ON HIS GENIUS.
THE SWORN ENEMY OF SUPERMAN, HE HAS
VOWED THAT THE WORLD WILL TURN ITS
BACK ON THE MAN OF STEEL, AND INSTEAD
EMBRACE HUMANITY'S CHAMPION...
AND FUTURE RULER...

LEX LUTHOR

WIL MOSS: *asst. editor*
MATT IDELSON: *editor*
SUPERMAN created by
JERRY SIEGEL &
JOE SHUSTER



"I'M THINKING ABOUT THE EVENTS OF A WEEK AGO..."

SO ALL WE'D HAVE TO DO TO INCREASE THE SENSOR'S RANGE--

AND THE POWER.

NO--

I NEED RANGE AND POWER TO FIND THE LANTERN RINGS.

NO, BECAUSE--

DON'T KEEP SAYING THAT WORD.

NO, LISTEN--

MR. LUTHOR, YOU CAN'T HAVE THE POWER.

YOU CAN'T HAVE--

SPALDING--

HAVE THAT MAN FIRED.

!

WITH REFERENCES AND RUMORS SO HE NEVER WORKS IN THIS BUSINESS AGAIN.



"I DO THINK HE OVERREACTED..."

--KILL YOU, YOU SON OF--!

WHD

GET HIM AWAY FROM--!

--A FAMILY TO FEED! HE DOESN'T KNOW--!



"EVEN BY YESTERDAY, THE WOUND HADN'T COMPLETELY HEALED."

YOU COULD CONCEAL THAT.



YOU COULD USE SOME FOUNDATION.

I COULD SHOW YOU HOW TO BLEND IT IN.

GO ON, HAVE AN ADVENTURE OUTSIDE YOUR SKILL SET.



I DON'T KNOW, LOIS.

THE BRUISE REPRESENTS A REAL EXPERIENCE.



A REAL DISTURBING EXPERIENCE.

SOME THINGS YOU GOTTA KEEP UNDER WRAPS.

I CAN EAT
ANYTIME.

LOIS, WOULD
YOU CARE TO
JOIN ME?

I HAVE
TO DO
THIS.

YES,
MR. LUTHOR?

AH, SASKY,
I'M GLAD IT'S
YOU ON
SHIFT.

I'VE MADE UP
MY MIND ABOUT THE
FORMER EMPLOYEE WHO
ASSAULTED ME.

WOULD YOU
KILL HIM NOW,
PLEASE?

"SO YOU FINALLY
GAVE IN?"

"I HAVE TRIED
TO SHOW
MERCY, LOIS--"

"BUT YES,
I CAN'T STOP--"

"--THINKING
ABOUT HIM.
ABOUT HOW
HE MADE
ME HELPLESS.
IF ONLY FOR
A MOMENT."

KRAK

"I CAN'T LET
HIM LIVE."





—THE POWER
OF WIELDING
A RING.





"BUT THE NEED THAT WENT WITH IT..."

THE T-TRUTH...
WHAT I REALLY
WANT...

...IS TO BE
SUPERMAN.



THE THINGS THE
ORANGE RING MAKES
ONE DESIRE.

RIDICULOUS.



I DEMAND THEM,
GUARDIAN!


I WILL HAVE
THE POWER TO
SAVE THE
WORLD MV--



HOW WERE
YOU PLANNING ON
FINISHING THAT
SENTENCE?

"MV WAY"?
"MV POWER HAS
CREATED"?
"MV PEOPLE
LIVE ON"?





MASTER,
NOW WE
UNDERSTAND.

YOU ARE
FOR HUMANITY,
AND WE WERE
NOT.

I THINK
THIS MIGHT
SATISFY MY
NEED.

THE, OH!
LAB BOYS MAY
HAVE GONE A
LITTLE TOO FAR
THERE.

IS THAT YOUR
FATHER WITH
YOU? BUT...ISN'T
HE DEAD?



THE **BLACK**
LANTERN RINGS ARE
THE ODD ONES OUT,
OF COURSE...

THEY JUST
DISINTEGRATED.



ALL THAT
POWER, GONE,
JUST LIKE THAT.
NO, I DON'T
BELIEVE IT.



THERE
OUGHT TO BE
TRACES.

I WANT...
I **NEED** TO FIND...
SOME PATTERN...
THAT COULD LEAD
ME TO THE SECRET
OF THE RINGS IN
GENERAL...

HEY--



MAYBE YOU
SHOULD...

SLEEP
ON IT?

"WHICH BRINGS US TO TODAY..."

STILL NO SIGN OF AN UNDAMAGED BLACK RING?

NO, SIR.

BUT NO SIGN OF SUPERMAN EITHER?

NO, SIR.

I SHOULD BILL HIM FOR THIS HOLE.*

*SUPERMAN INADVERTENTLY DAMAGED A NUMBER OF BUILDINGS IN HIS FIGHT WITH GENERAL ZOD IN WAR OF THE SUPERMEN #4.
--Silly Foreman Matt

SO HE'S GENUINELY GONE ON THIS JOURNEY OF HIS.

DOUBTLESS TO SEEK MORE POWER.

IN THE FLVOVER STATES, ODDLY.

HOW IRONIC IF HE SHOULD RETURN TO FIND THAT I'D SAVED A GRATEFUL HUMANITY.

WE'D EXPECT ME TO TAKE A FANCY NAME.

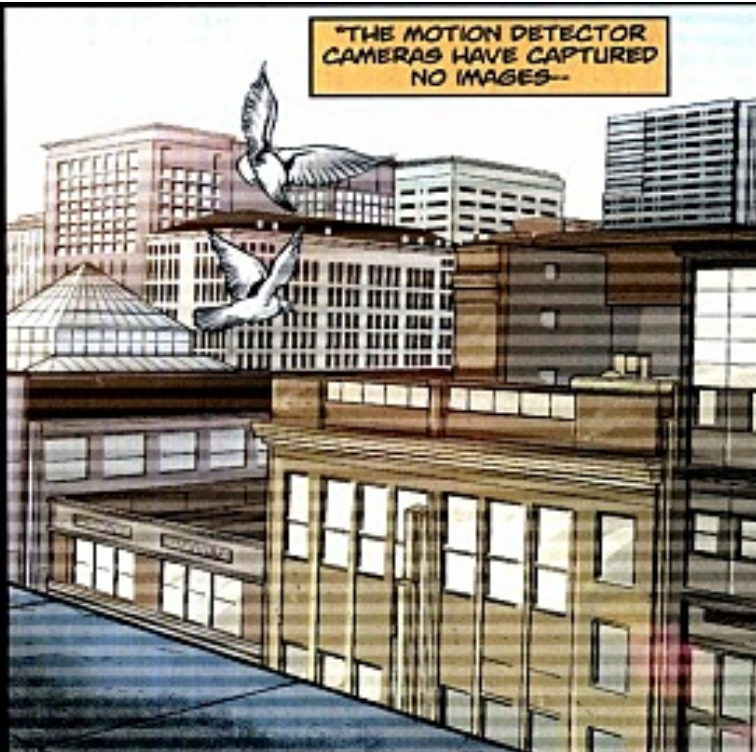
BUT UNLIKE HIM, I'D CHOOSE SOMETHING WITH A RING TO IT.

VERY DROLL, SIR. IT WAS ONCE SAID THAT PUNS ARE THE HIGHEST FORM OF WIT.

EVERY NOW AND THEN, SPALDING...

...BUT NO, I'D REALIZE IF YOU WERE GENUINELY MOCKING ME.

TELL ME ABOUT THE SENSORS.



"THE MOTION DETECTOR
CAMERAS HAVE CAPTURED
NO IMAGES--"



"APART
FROM--"

"I DON'T
CARE."



"STEEL HAS NOT
BEEN CONTACTED
BY SUPERMAN."

"HOWEVER, HE
CONTINUALLY
ATTEMPTS TO
OBSERVE OUR
OPERATIONS--"

"HE'S JUST A GENIUS
IN A POWERED SUIT.
NEXT!"



"AND THE GROUND
SENSORS IN
SMALLVILLE--"

"WHY IS HE
STILL--?"


"NEVER MIND.
DON'T TALK
TO ME ABOUT
THAT."



DAMN IT.
I'VE BEEN PUTTING
THIS OFF--

THAT'S
MY DILEMMA,
SPALDING.

RIGHT NOW,
NEED IS
WINNING OVER
CAUTION.



I'M GOING
TO USE THE
ISOPOD.

IS THAT
WISE, SIR?

IT HASN'T
EVEN BEEN
TESTED ON
ANIMALS--


--LET ALONE
HOMELESS
PEOPLE.

SO BE IT.

PERHAPS
THIS IS AN OLD
LESSON--

THAT
GIVING IN TO
NEED...

...IS HOW
THE FINEST
CONQUESTS
COME ABOUT.



I WILL RETURN
HAVING FOUND SOME
CLUE TO GAINING THE
POWER OF THE
LANTERN RINGS--

--OR DRIVEN
INSANE IN THE
ATTEMPT.



**LEXCORP INTELLIGENT
LISTENING ENGINE**


SUBJECT: "BLACK LANTERN RING
DESTRUCTION"

ALL PNEURONS **ENGAGED**



RETINAS
PREPARED.

GO.



"The rings were everywhere—"
—Daily Planet

"Rings themselves now seen to have—"
—WGBS.com

"—calling them 'Dark Quarks'—"
—Coast City Chronicle

"a paper in *Nature* suggests the new unknown force is flowing—"
—Paper submitted by Dr. Simon Kavanagh at Metropolis Institute of Technology

"A ring is just a structure—"

"—swallowing its own tail."
—Starchild818
Mindswipe Forums

"—some new influence on the subatomic world—"
—@benjamingoldacre


"—*Journal of Particle Physics* ponders what might have caused change in structure of universe—"
—Fourth World Science News

YES.



THE COMPUTER'S
TRANSLATING IT INTO A
VISUAL REPRESENTATION
NOW, AN INTERDIMENSIONAL
MAP, WHICH SHOULD...





SO...OKAY, COSMIC RING
AROUND THE UNIVERSE,
INTO OTHER DIMENSIONS
EVEN--

JUST HOW DOES
THAT HELP YOU GET
EVEN ONE RING ON
YOUR FINGER?

AND NOW
I SOUND LIKE YOUR
MOTHER.


LOIS--



IF I GO TO THE PLACES INDICATED,
WHERE THE STRENGTH OF RESIDUAL
BLACK LANTERN RING ENERGY
IS STRONGEST--

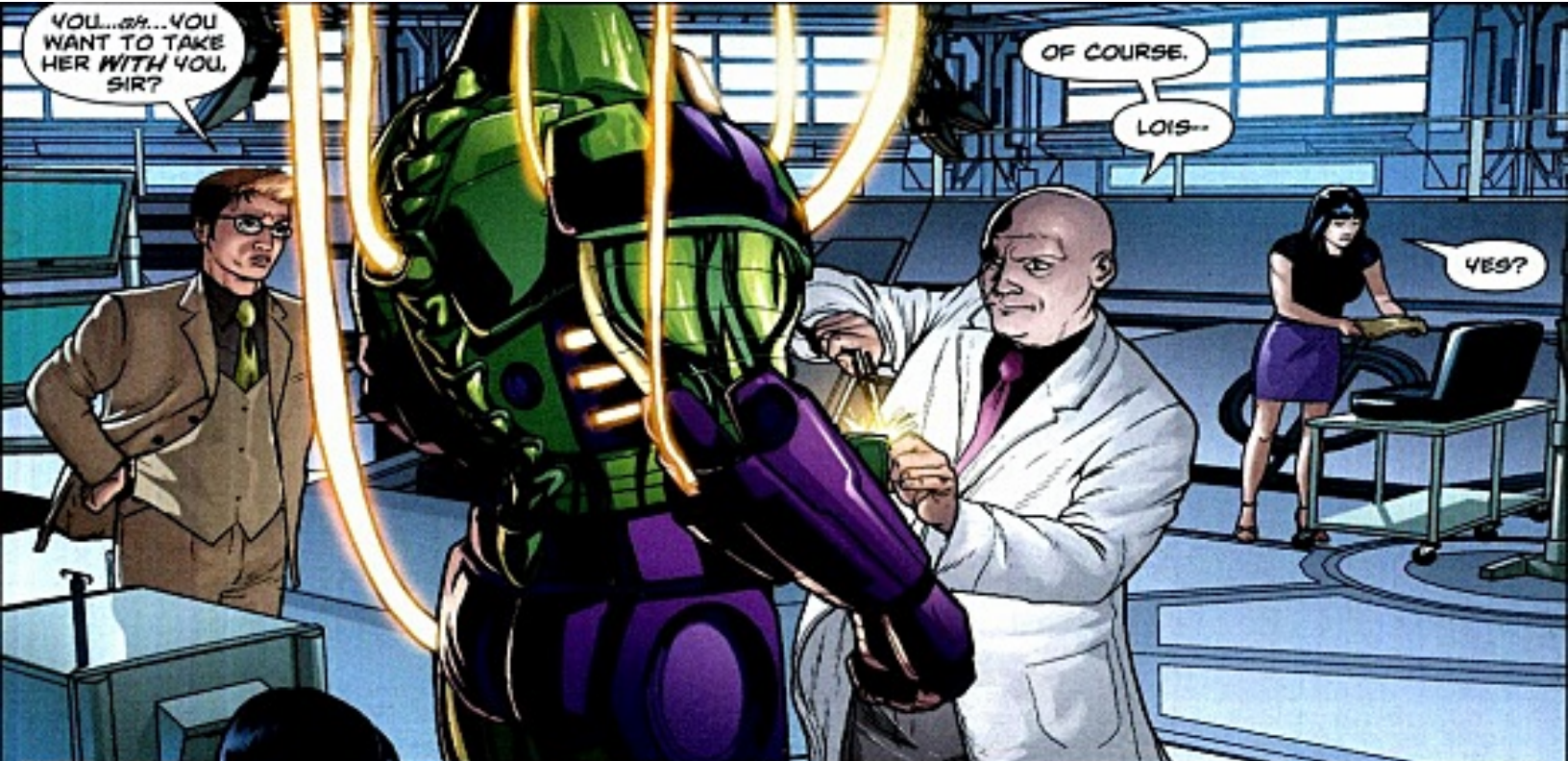
IT MIGHT BE POSSIBLE TO
SAMPLE THAT ENERGY, WORK OUT
THE SOURCE CODE OF HOW ALL THE
RINGS WORK, USE IT TO CREATE
MY OWN POWER RING.

WHAT YOU SEE
THERE IS MY QUEST,
MY NEED, MY NEW
IDENTITY WAITING
TO BE BORN.



I'M GOING TO
FIRE UP THE POWER
SUIT, AND EMBRACE
MY DESTINY--

--AND YOU'RE
COMING WITH
ME.





I LIKE HAVING LOIS AROUND TO GROUND ME. TO VOICE A VIEWPOINT THAT'S NOT ENTIRELY ABOUT *NEED*.

THAT WILL BE ESPECIALLY USEFUL WHEN I'M BECOMING A GOD IN SPACE.



IF YOUR PEOPLE OFFERED ME MORE ROBUST SUPPORT, I WOULDN'T NEED TO--

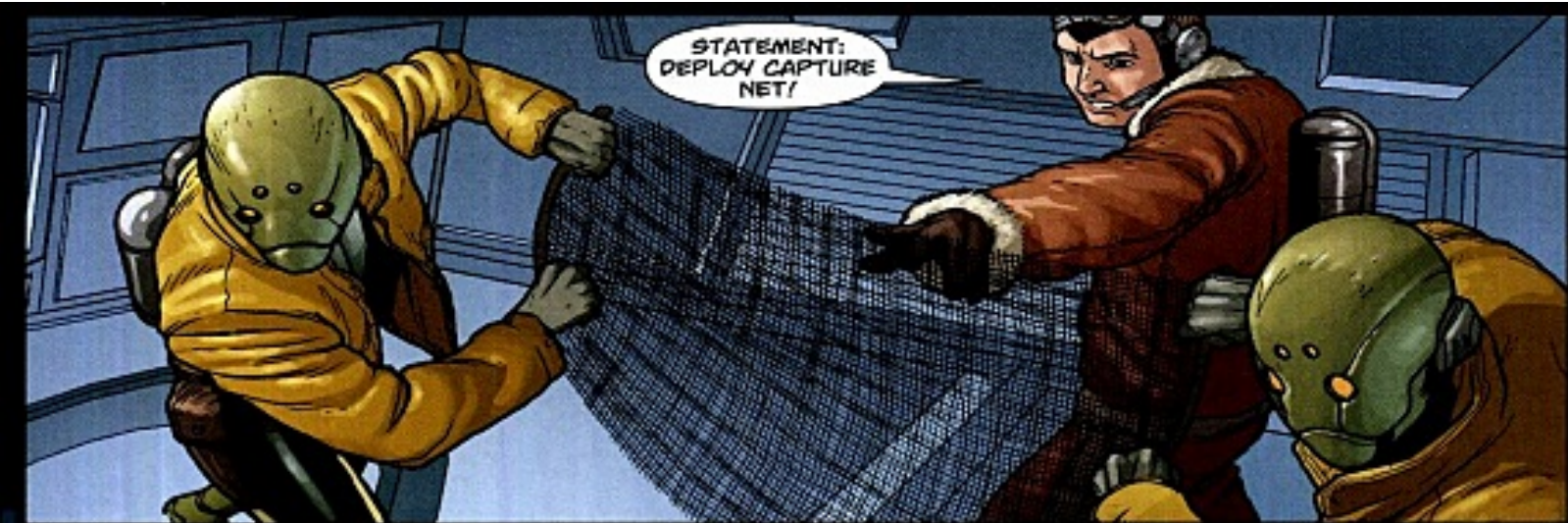
SPALDING, WHAT DOES YOUR EXPRESSION MEAN?

SIR, IF I MAY BE SO BOLD--



LOOK OUT--

--SIR!



~SATISFYING~

GRRRR!

BAMBAMBAMBAM

RARGGH!







SO, YOU'RE WORKING FOR SOMEONE. WHO YOU SEEM TO BE IN MENTAL COMMUNICATION WITH.

WHO SPECIFICALLY WANTED ME HUNG UPSIDE-DOWN. SO I COULD "THINK ABOUT MY SITUATION."

INTERESTING.



STATEMENT:
"WORKING
FOR--"

EMOTIONAL
OUTBURST:
AS IF WE HAD A
CHOICE!

WE'RE AS
TRAPPED AS
YOU ARE!



Ah.

SO WHEN
DO I MEET
THIS POWERFUL
PSYCHIC?



WORRIED STATEMENT:
I HOPE YOU'RE NOT
ACTUALLY GOING TO
MEET--


EXCLAMATION:
OH.

OH NO.

PLEADING:
PLEASE,
NO!







LEX LUTHOR,
YOUR NEEDS
DON'T MATTER
NOW.

YOU ARE IN
THE POWER
OF--

--MISTER
MIND!

NEXT
MIND:
THE GAP.

THE MAN OF STEEL!

J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI takes on



Illustrated by
EDDY BARROWS

Covers by
JOHN CASSADAY



The epic story "Grounded" begins in 1961

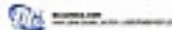
DC Comics and DC Universe



Illustrated by
DON KRAMER

Wonder Woman

An all new era begins in 1986



THE AMAZON WARRIOR!

J. MICHAEL STRACZYNSKI takes on

WELL? WHAT DID YOU THINK?

I'm assuming that by now you've had a chance to check out our stellar anniversary issues SUPERMAN #700, BATMAN #700 and WONDER WOMAN #600. Those are pretty impressive milestones for a series to hit... after all, it's not like you can just slap an issue number like that on a title and act like you'd earned it (that would be silly). Our editors and talent put a lot of hard work into making these books something special, and perhaps the most gratifying part is that they herald an exciting new era for some of our biggest characters. Case in point — I'd like to use this space to once again formally welcome J. Michael Straczynski as the regular writer on Superman and Wonder Woman. In just a few weeks his first regular issues of both series (Wonder Woman #601 and Superman #701) will hit the stands and you will finally know what we've known for months — they're freaking rule. Seriously, JMS has plans for Wonder Woman and Superman that will have you eagerly awaiting each new issue. If the anniversary issues weren't enough of a clue what he has in store for you, I urge you to check out recent issues of his THE BRAVE AND THE BOLD run. Pay special attention to issue #33 guest-starring Wonder Woman because it may be one of the best single comics you will read all year. Now imagine that goodness spread across two monthly titles and you get some idea of where we're going with all of this. So please join me in giving a big DC Nation welcome to JMS and enjoy the awesomeness!

Be seeing you,

- Ian Sattler, Senior Story Editor DCU

DC NATION



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BATMAN

A full-page illustration of Batman in his iconic suit, standing with his arms outstretched in a dramatic pose. He is set against a background of intense orange and yellow flames or a fiery explosion. The word "BATMAN" is written in large, bold, white letters with a black outline at the top of the page.

AN UNTOLD TALE OF
BRUCE WAYNE AND HIS
ADVENTURES BETWEEN
**BATMAN R.I.P.
& FINAL CRISIS**

WRITTEN BY
**GRANT
MORRISON**

ART BY
**TONY
DANIEL**

A TWO-PART STORY
BEGINNING IN #701

**JULY
2010**

JADE IS BACK! BUT IS HER RETURN A BLESSING OR A CURSE?

BRIGHTEST DAY™



JUSTICE LEAGUE of AMERICA #46

JUSTICE SOCIETY of AMERICA #41

A 5-PART CROSSOVER EVENT

WRITTEN BY **JAMES ROBINSON**

ART BY **MARK BAGLEY**

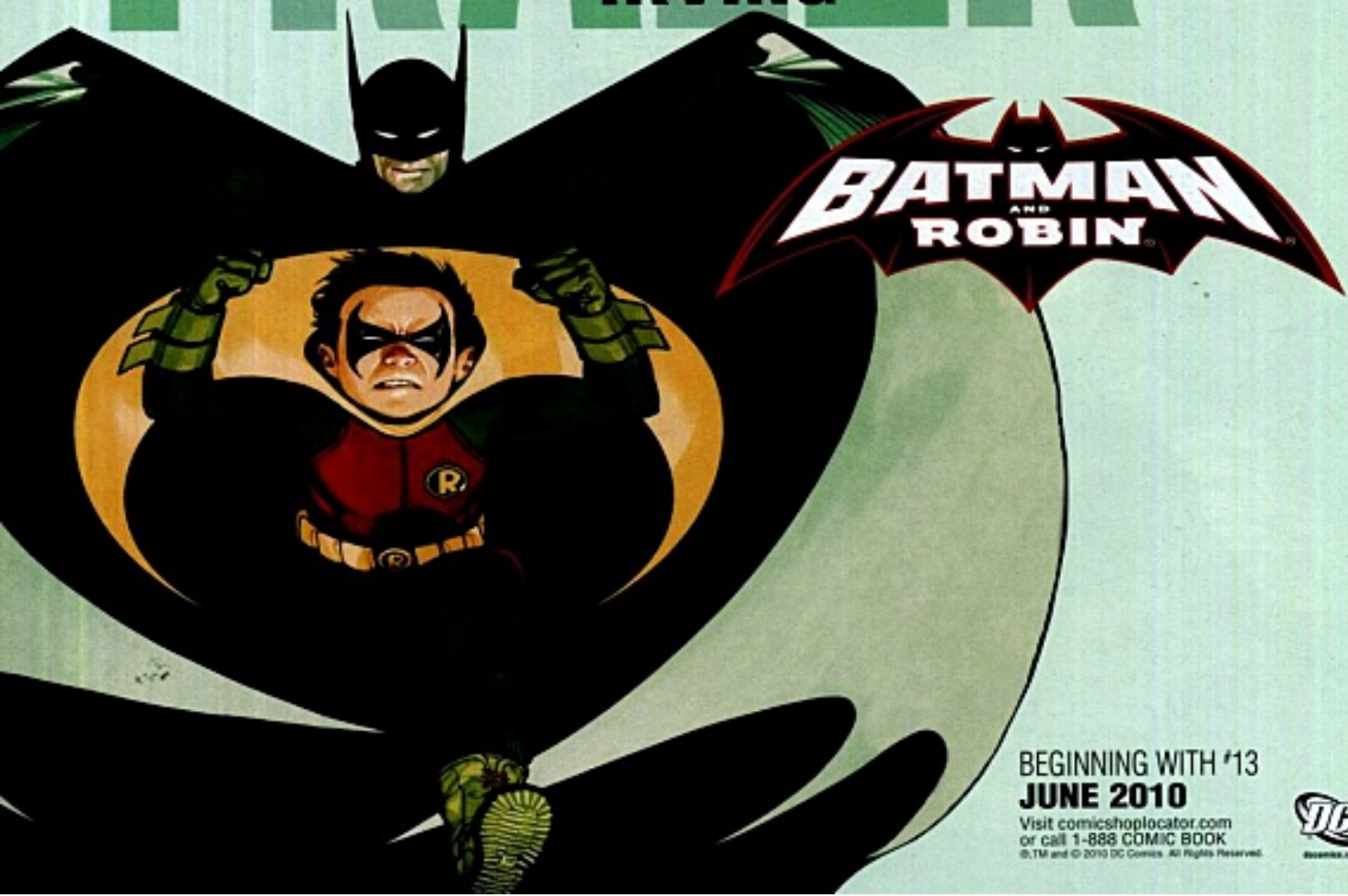


BEGINNING
JUNE 2010

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GRANT MORRISON

FRAZER IRVING



BEGINNING WITH #13
JUNE 2010

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WHAT'S NEXT?

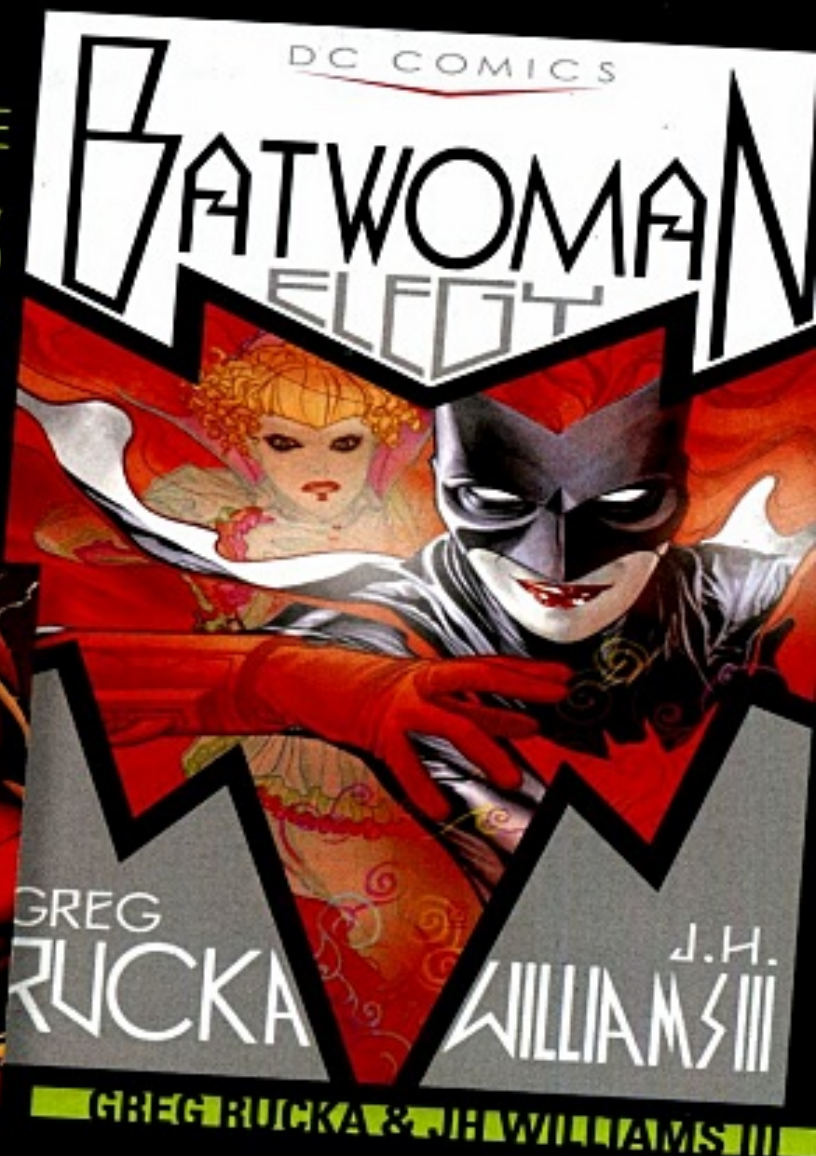
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IN YEARS."

—IGN



GEOFF JOHNS & ETHAN VAN SCIVER



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WILLIAMS III

"A FANTASTIC
READ."

—MANIA

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FIRST CHAPTERS



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They call him charming... *Beast Charming.*

